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directed by **Hallie Gordon**

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contents

4 letter from the artistic director

by **Martha Lavey**

16 the reality behind *fake*

Interview with Playwright and Director **Eric Simonson**
and Associate Artistic Director **David New**

20 the mystery of piltdown man

by Artistic Intern **Knud Adams**

22 in the throes of crisis

by Artistic Intern **Knud Adams**

24 designer's notebook

by Costume Designer **Kärin Kopischke**

26 overthinking the play

by Director of Artistic Development **Polly Carl**

30 what's on at steppenwolf

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PRINTING

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letter from Artistic Director Martha Lavey

We open our season of belief with *Fake*, a new play by ensemble member Eric Simonson. *Fake* follows two narratives: one set in 1914; the other in 1953. Both narratives take place in East Sussex and in London and are linked by the story of Piltdown Man. Piltdown Man was the artifact, discovered in East Sussex, purported to be the "missing link"—the evidence of an evolutionary link between Cro-Magnon and Modern Man.

In the earlier story, set at the time of the artifact's discovery, the characters are historical personages, gathered together by the novelist, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Like his most famous literary creation, Sherlock Holmes, Doyle gathers a cast of characters in a drawing room, confident that the pressure of their being together will uncover the truth of what he believes is a hoax. The 1914 story is an inscription of the whodunit structure of Doyle's famous novels.

These scenes from 1914 alternate with scenes from 1953, the year that Piltdown Man was revealed to be a fake. The characters in the 1953 story are analogues to their 1914 counterparts and, although they continue the narrative of the Piltdown Man discovery and unmasking, the focus of their story shifts to the interpersonal: the questions of authenticity, the tension between religious and scientific belief, the questions about what is known and what is impossible to know take on a decidedly personal cast.

In Piltdown Man, Eric has discovered a potent symbol by which to test our convictions about belief/authenticity/science/the spiritual. What do we do, as a species, as individuals, when reality feels discontinuous, when a leap of evolutionary development demands evidence or a leap of faith? Because both of the stories in the play—the one set in 1914 and the one set in 1953—are constructed as mysteries, I resist describing their plots and their outcomes. Rather, I alert you to the multiple dualities in the play that form the central core of the play's theme.

The central image of the play is the Piltdown Man artifact itself. The skull is a hybrid structure: the cranium suggests an evolutionary advance over its lower part, the mandible, which is closer in structure to the jaw of an ape. The image of the skull, suggestive of the evolution of human consciousness, becomes a potent symbol of man's dual nature—a residue of our animal past, a suggestion of our capacity for higher-level thought and ideation. Eric mimics this conjoining of past and present in his structure of the play. He gives us two moments in history and allows the story to oscillate between them. The narrative of the play is not a simple chronology: we move back and forth in time with the present moment of your receiving it a double-vision: as an audience we are watching two stories in parallel, each informing the other. Like the skull of Piltdown Man, the story of *Fake* allows us to see the past and present conjoined in a single creation.



Martha Lavey

Another set of oppositions is provided by the characters within each narrative. Both storylines pose a mystery and the characters in each are charged with solving the mystery at hand. In the 1914 narrative, the British fiction writer, Doyle, is paired with Rebecca Eastman, an American journalist. They, in turn, are positioned against an historian, Arthur Woodward. Fiction, journalism and history—each a different take on narrative, each committed to a version of "the truth." Joining them are a scientist, Charles Dawson, and a philosopher/theologian, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, another oppositional pairing of truth-seekers. As we come to discover, each of them has a personal stake in the prosecution of their point of view—each calls into service the methodology and the bias of their profession to substantiate the truth-claims that their personal and emotional history demands.

In the 1953 storyline, the characters are, again, representatives of varying and oppositional narrative starting points. Jonathan is an atheist and an academic who relies on the examination of historical artifacts to construct the evolutionary record. Jonathan's faith is deductive logic. His young colleague, American Doug Arnt, works more directly in the field—he engages the objects and sites themselves, he subjects them to clinical examination and testing, he speculates. As he says to Kat, Jonathan's fiancée and herself an anthropologist, "I don't fit in with the smart set... I think you can get bogged down with the deductions, you know, lose the big picture? There's more to life than facts and figures, don't you think?" "Like what," Kat asks. "I don't know," he says. "Mystery."

With the Piltdown Man artifact serving as the central image in both storylines of the play, we watch this array of characters negotiate the mystery of origins through the construction of oppositional narratives. The question that the Piltdown Man artifact provokes about the origin of the species activates in each of them a kind of self-excavation. The convictions that have been formed by the characters' personal histories become the informing narratives of their systems of inquiry about the world. We develop systems of thought, disciplinary narratives (science! religion! journalism!) that seek primacy as the most complete, the most reliable, the truest—but those narratives are always informed by our personal stake in the outcome.

I think *Fake* is a wonderfully provocative starting point for our season of *belief*. We want to know, we want the truth and we construct systems of thought, tenets of belief, to address the mysteries that allude our ability to gain those certainties. The past—of our own lives, of our species' life—is a profound mystery that will always fascinate and always elude. Deep at the heart of that fascination and that elusiveness is a duality: we live in the animal kingdom we call our past, we live in a mind capable of imagining a transcendence and a future. Perhaps, like the story of *Fake*, an authentic view of our human condition will always require a double vision: a parallel storyline of past and present, religion and science, logic and mystery, doubt and faith.

Martha Lavey
Artistic Director



steppenwolf

fake

written and
directed
by ensemble
member
Eric Simonson

featuring
Kate Arrington^{†*}
Coburn Goss^{*}
Francis Guinan^{†*}
Alan Wilder^{†*}
Larry Yando^{*}

Scenic Design
Todd Rosenthal
Costume Design
Kärin Kopischke^{*}
Lighting Design
Joe Appelt
Sound and Music Design
Barry G. Funderburg^{*}
Dramaturg
Rebecca Ann Rugg
Dialect Coach
Cecilie O'Reilly
Stage Manager
Michelle Medvin^{*}
Assistant Stage Manager
Kathleen E. Petroziello^{*}

Production Sponsor of *Fake*:



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Steppenwolf's New Plays Initiative is generously sponsored by:
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and members of the **Directors Circle**.
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Fake was originally commissioned by the Manhattan Theatre Club, Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director, Barry Grove, Executive Producer with funds provided by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

Steppenwolf Theatre Company is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for nonprofit professional theater.

[†] member of the Steppenwolf Theatre Company ensemble.

^{*} member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers.

⁺ member of United Scenic Artists, Local 829 of the IATSE.

cast/contributors

cast in order of appearance

KATE ARRINGTON^{†*}

Rebecca Eastman, Katarina Meras

FRANCIS GUINAN^{†*}

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Jonathan Cole

ALAN WILDER^{†*}

Arthur Woodward, Paul Moody

COBURN GOSS*

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Doug Arnt, voice of Sherlock Holmes

LARRY YANDO*

Charles Dawson, Henry Billings, voice of Dr. Watson and BBC Radio announcer

setting

- The library of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sussex, 1914
- Jonathan Cole's flat in South Kensington, London, 1953
- London Museum of Natural History, the library, 1914 & 1953
- Piltdown excavation site, Sussex, 1914 & 1953

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

There will be a post-show discussion immediately following the performance.

understudies

Leslie Frame

Rebecca Eastman, Katarina Meras

James D. Farruggio Pierre Teilhard De Chardin,
Charles Dawson, Henry Billings, Doug Arnt

Gary Simmers

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Jonathan Cole,
Arthur Woodward, Paul Moody

additional staff

Casting Director **Erica Daniels**

Assistant Director **Patrick Holland**

Assistant Lighting Designer **Gina Patterson**

Charge Scenic Artist **Joann White**

Assistant Charge Artist **Melissa Rutherfordood**

Carpentry Overhire **Nate Crawford,**
Emily Altman, Andrew Berg, Lyle Friedrichs,
Christopher Grubb, Nicholas Heggstad,
Andrew Schoen, Matthew Koller

Properties Overhire **Rachelle Moore,**
Stephen Carmody

Running Crew **Caleb Franklin, Mary Marsh,**
Vanessa Rundle, Yasmin Dincer-Ubl

Stage Management Apprentice **Karyn Labbe**

[†] member of the Steppenwolf Theatre Company ensemble

* member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers.



KATE ARRINGTON (Rebecca Eastman, Katarina Meras) joined the Steppenwolf ensemble in 2007. She has appeared at Steppenwolf in *When the Messenger is Hot*, *The Well-Appointed Room*, *The Pain and the Itch* and *The Violet Hour*. Most recently, Kate appeared as Regan in *King Lear* with Stacy Keach at the Shakespeare Theatre Company in D.C. New York theatre credits include work at the Lincoln Center theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club (Biltmore Theatre), 59E59 Theater, Classic Stage Company, Soho Repertory, The Mint Theatre, and HERE. Regional theatre credits include the Goodman Theatre, Old Globe Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Maine State Shakespeare Theatre and North Carolina Theatre. Her film credits include *The King of Irontown* and *The Missing Person*. Kate lives in Brooklyn with Michael Shannon and their perfect daughter, Sylvie.



COBURN GOSS (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Doug Arnt, Voice of Sherlock Holmes) last appeared at Steppenwolf in *Dead Man's Cell Phone*. Also with Steppenwolf: *When the Messenger Is Hot* (also Off-Broadway at 59E59 Theater), *The Royal Family* and *Absolution*. Chicago credits include: *The Crowd You're In*

With and Vigils (Goodman Theatre); *Dying City* (Next Theatre); *Seagull* (Writers' Theatre); *A Whistle in the Dark* and *Journey's End* (Seanachai Theatre). Regional: *The Last True Believer* (Seattle Repertory); *Irish Crazy Jane* and *The Good Times Are Killing Me* (Arkansas Repertory). Film: *The Lucky Ones*, *Shelter*, *Joshua* and *What Women Want*. Television: *E/R*, *The Beast* and *Prison Break*.



FRANCIS GUINAN (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Jonathan Cole) has been an ensemble member since 1979. He most recently appeared in *Art*, *The Seafarer*, *Kafka on the Shore* and *August: Osage County* (also Broadway). Other Steppenwolf appearances include *The Crucible*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Love Song*, *Cherry Orchard*, *Mizlansky/Zilinsky or Schmucks*, *The Libertine*, *Skylight*, *The Grapes of Wrath* (also Broadway) and many others. Mr. Guinan has also appeared at Northlight Theatre in *Inherit the Wind*. He was recently honored with inclusion in the inaugural group of Lunt-Fontanne Fellows, associated with the Ten Chimneys Foundation. For Kate, always.



ALAN WILDER (Arthur Woodward, Paul Moody), an ensemble member since Steppenwolf's inception in 1976, has appeared in more

productions than any other actor... Steppenwolf productions, that is. He was most recently seen in *The Tempest* and *The Seafarer*. On screen, he was most recently seen in *Public Enemies* and *Gifted Hands*. But don't be fooled by Hollywood special effects, Alan appears older and plumper on screen than he is in real life.



LARRY YANDO (Charles Dawson, Henry Billings, Voice of Dr. Watson and BBC Radio Announcer), since returning from three years as Scar in the national tour of *The Lion King*, has appeared in *Cymbeline* and *12th Night* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *Bach at Leipzig*, *As You Like It* and *Nixon's Nixon* (Writers' Theatre); the world premiere of *Goldbrick* (Collaboraction and Walkabout Theater); and two years as Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* (Goodman Theatre). Other credits include many principal roles in many plays at many theaters, including Court Theatre, Steppenwolf, Milwaukee Rep, Madison Rep, Indiana State Rep, Apple Tree Theatre, Royal George Theatre, Defiant Theatre and Peninsula Players. He has taught acting at DePaul University, Northwestern University, Columbia University, Act One Conservatory and Chicago Shakespeare Theater's Classical Training Program and is a text/verse coach at CST. Larry has received *Chicago Magazine's* Actor of the Year Award, *The Chicago Reader's* Best Actor Award and DePaul University's Excellence in the Arts Award.

JAMES D. FARRUGGIO (u/s Chardin, Arnt, Dawson, Billings) has performed around Chicago in *Of Mice and Men* (Steppenwolf Theatre); *Stop/Kiss* (The Gift Theatre); *7 Blow Jobs* (Mary Arrchie); *Trueblinka*, *Sketchbook 7* and *Sketchbook 9* (Collaboraction); *The Kentucky Cycle* (Infamous Commonwealth); *Last Supper* (Infusion Theatre); and *Leaving Iowa* (Leaving Iowa Productions). Television and film credits include *The Beast*, *Prison Break* and *Batman: Dark Knight*.

LESLIE FRAME (u/s Rebecca, Katarina) is very excited to be working with Steppenwolf for the first time after completing *The School* at Steppenwolf last summer. Chicago credits include *Why Do You Smoke So Much, Lily?* and *The Adventures of Nervous Boy* (Gorilla Tango Theater); *Acid Rain* (Point of Contention); *Doctor Atomic* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); *Laundry and Bourbon* (Oil Lamp Theater); *Rogue 8 Issues 1-3* (Rogue Theatre); and the upcoming *Wilson Wants It All* (House Theatre). Many thanks to Erica, Eric, Kelli and Franny.

GARY SIMMERS (u/s Doyle, Cole, Woodward, Moody) is very happy to return to Steppenwolf. His Chicago credits include *Art* (Steppenwolf); *Watch on the Rhine*, *Another Part of the Forest*, *Landscape of the Body*, *Sweetest Swing in Baseball* and *Talley and Son* (Eclipse Theatre Company); *The Crucible* and *Death and the Maiden* (Timeline Theatre Company); and *The Incident* (Next Theatre). Gary really likes being a Dad.



Playwright and Director Eric Simonson with Larry Yando.

Coburn Goss with ensemble member Alan Wilder and Larry Yando.

ERIC SIMONSON (Playwright and Director) joined the ensemble in 1993. His plays and adaptations at Steppenwolf include *Nomath-embra* (written with Ntozake Shange and Joseph Shabalala), *Carter's Way* and, most recently, *Honest* (for First Look). Other plays include *The Last Hurrah*, *Work Song: Three Views of Frank Lloyd Wright* (with Jeffrey Hatcher), *Edge of the World*, *Lombardi: The Only Thing* and *Speak American*. His work has been produced in Japan and throughout the United States at theaters including The Huntington Theatre Company, L.A. Theatre Works, City Theatre of Pittsburgh, The Kennedy Center, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Arizona Theatre Company, Madison Repertory Theatre, Kansas City Repertory Theatre and Crossroads Theatre Company. His adaptation of *Moby Dick* at Milwaukee Repertory was chosen as one of *Time Magazine's* top ten productions of 2002.

Simonson is also an accomplished theatre, film and opera director. His production of Steppenwolf's *The Song of Jacob Zulu* received six Tony® Award nominations, including one for best direction. He received the 2006 Academy Award for his documentary short *A Note of Triumph*, as well as the 2005 Princess Grace Statue Award for sustained artistic achievement. His adaptation of Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (originally produced at Steppenwolf) recently received its Off-Broadway premiere in December at New York's 59E59 Theater. He is currently overseeing the development of three new operas for Minnesota Opera's *OperaWorks*. Recent commissions include plays for Manhattan Theatre Club, City Theatre and Arizona Theater Company.



Ensemble members Alan Wilder and Francis Guinan.

TODD ROSENTHAL (Scenic Design)

received the 2008 Tony® Award for Best Scenic Design of a Play and the 2009 Olivier Award for *August: Osage County*. Recent projects: *The Crucible* (Steppenwolf Theatre); *The Clean House* and *The Sins of Sor Juana* (Goodman Theatre); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *A Delicate Balance* (Arena Stage); *August: Osage County* (North American Tour and Sydney Theatre); *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Guthrie Theater); and *Of Mice and Men* on Broadway. Todd also designs for New York's *Big Apple Circus*, exhibited in The 2007 Prague Quadrennial in Czech Republic and teaches design at Northwestern University. He is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama. Website: www.toddar.com.

KÄRIN KOPISCHKE (Costume Design)

returns to Steppenwolf where her work includes *Carter's Way*, *The Weir*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *Sideman*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, *Nomathemba*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *SLAVS!*. Other work includes world premieres at American Conservatory Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Milwaukee Rep, Huntington, Minnesota Opera, Kansas City Rep, Victory Gardens Theatre, Children's Theatre Company, Peninsula Players and classics at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Long Wharf Theatre, Kennedy Center, Crossroads, Court Theatre and Cincinnati Playhouse. She has received the Joseph Jefferson Award, the AriZoni Award and was nominated for the Prague Quadrennial. Kärin has taught costume design at DePaul and Northwestern.

JOE APPELT (Lighting Design) Joe's recent credits include *Boleros for the Disenchanted* (Goodman Theatre); the world premiere of *Boleros for the Disenchanted* (Yale Repertory Theatre); *Noises Off* (Cleveland Playhouse); and *The Glass Experience* (Museum of Science and

Industry), an extensive exhibit on the history, industrial application and artistic use of glass. His regional theatre credits include numerous productions at Milwaukee Rep as well as productions at The Studio Theatre in Washington, D.C., Studio Arena Theatre in Buffalo, Syracuse Stage and American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, as well as productions performed at the Spoleto Festival USA and in Tokyo, Japan. He has served as Resident Lighting Designer for Missouri Rep (now The Kansas City Repertory Theatre) and the Kansas City Ballet. Mr. Appelt teaches at Northwestern University where he is Director of the MFA Stage Design Program.

BARRY G. FUNDERBURG (Sound and

Music Design) is pleased to return to Steppenwolf and to be working again with Eric Simonson. Previous Steppenwolf productions include *Carter's Way* (2008 Jeff Award for Sound Design), *Mother Courage and Her Children* and *Mizlanksy/Zilinsky*. Regional theatre design and/or composition credits include over 45 productions at Milwaukee Rep, including recent productions of *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Cherry Orchard* with Ben Barnes and *Mirandolina* with László Marton; Eric Simonson's *Carter's Way* and *Work Song* (Kansas City Rep); and productions at Arizona Theatre Company, L.A. Theatre Works, City Theatre Company in Pittsburgh, Centerstage in Baltimore, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, American Players Theatre and Indiana Repertory Theatre. Other Chicago credits include Next Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre Company, Theatre at the Center and Oak Park Festival Theatre. He has received four Jeff Award nominations, two Jeff Awards and an MFA in Theatrical Sound Design from Purdue University. In addition to theatre, Barry also designs sound and mixes live events for several corporate clients, including AARP.

REBECCA ANN RUGG (Dramaturg)

currently teaches in the Department of Drama-turgy and Dramatic Criticism at the Yale School of Drama and is a new Chicagoan. Formerly, she worked at the Public Theater under George C. Wolfe, as Dramaturg and Director of New Projects, focusing on musical theater develop-ment. She was dramaturg on the original productions of *Caroline, or Change*, *Radiant Baby* (Public Theater); and *Harlem Song* (Apollo Theatre). She produced the University network of the 365 International Festival, which organized thousands of artists to produce Suzan-Lori Parks's *365 Days/365 Plays* cycle. Also in Chicago, she worked on *500 Clown and the Elephant Deal* (Steppenwolf Theatre).

MICHELLE MEDVIN (Stage Manager) is happy to be back at Steppenwolf, where previous credits include *Art*, *Dublin Carol*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *The Crucible*, *August: Osage County*, *The Pillowman*, *The Unmentionables*, *Love Song*, *The Well-Appointed Room*, *The Pain and the Itch*, *Pacific*, *The Dresser*, *Theatrical Essays*, *The Fall to Earth*, *Man From Nebraska*, *Purple Heart* (also traveled to Ireland's Galway Arts Festival), *We All Went Down to Amsterdam*, *No Place Like Home* and *Until We Find Each Other*. She has also stage managed recent productions with Hartford Stage, Dallas Theater Center and Portland Center Stage. Thanks, Trouble.

KATHLEEN E. PETROZIELLO (Assistant Stage Manager) is very excited to return to Steppenwolf, where she previously stage managed *Of Mice and Men* (Steppenwolf for Young Adults) and *Perfect Mendacity* (First Look). Other credits include: *Joan Dark* (Goodman Theatre); *Our Future Metropolis*, *Argonautika* and *Nelson Algren* (Lookingglass Theatre Company); *Panic* and *Final Curtain* (International Mystery Festival); and the Chicago productions of *Altar Boyz* and *Million*

Dollar Quartet. Kathleen has spent two summers at the Weston Playhouse in beautiful Weston, Vermont, where she has worked on *A Number, Cookin' at the Cookery* and *The Mikado*.

MARTHA LAVEY (Artistic Director) is an ensemble member and the Artistic Director of Steppenwolf Theatre and has appeared at Steppenwolf in *Up*, *Good Boys and True*, *Love-Lies-Bleeding*, *Lost Land*, *I Never Sang for My Father*, *The House of Lily*, *Valparaiso*, *The Memory of Water*, *The Designated Mourner*, *Supple in Combat*, *Time of My Life*, *A Clock-work Orange*, *Talking Heads*, *SLAVS!*, *Picasso at the Lapine Agile*, *Ghost in the Machine*, *A Summer Remembered*, *Love Letters*, *Aunt Dan and Lemon* and *Savages*. Elsewhere in Chicago she has performed at the Goodman, Victory Gardens, Northlight and Remains The-aters and in New York at the Women's Project and Productions. She has served on grants panels for the National Endowment for the Arts, The Theatre Communications Group (TCG), Three Arts, USA Artists and the City Arts panel of Chicago. Lavey holds a doctorate in Performance Studies from Northwestern University and is a member of the National Advisory Council for the School of Communica-tion at Northwestern and is board president of TCG. She is a recipient of the Sarah Siddons Award and an Alumni Merit Award from Northwestern University.

DAVID HAWKANSON (Executive Director)

prior to Steppenwolf was the Managing Director of the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, Minnesota, under the artistic leadership of Joe Dowling. Before the Guthrie, he served for eight years as the Managing Director of Hartford Stage Company in Connecticut with Artistic Director Mark Lamos. Earlier in his career, he was Managing Director of the Arizona Theater Company and a Guest Administrator at San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre. He was a former senior staff member at the National Endowment for the Arts and subsequently chairman of its Theater Program. He has also had an active career as an arts consultant and trustee for such national organizations as the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays, the Ford Foundation's Working Capitol Fund, National Arts Stabilization Fund, the League of Resident Theatres, Theatre Trustees of America, Theatre Communications Group, and the American Arts Alliance. He currently serves as a trustee of Door County's Peninsula Players and the League of Chicago Theatres and is Chairman of Illinois Arts Alliance.



Larry Yando with ensemble member Kate Arrington.



Playwright and Director Eric Simonson with ensemble member Francis Guinan.

the reality behind

fak

Interview with Playwright and Director
Eric Simonson

and Associate Artistic Director **David New**

e



David New: Eric, your play *Fake* contains historical figures and scenarios. What are the permissions and constraints as a playwright when you are using actual people and events as a jumping-off place? Do you feel free to create something new? Is there an obligation to remain somewhat true to historical accounts?

Eric Simonson: I do a fair bit of research if the play has characters from history, and I try my best to capture the essence of any real person. But the story in *Fake* is pretty much made up, so I take a fair amount of artistic license. We're talking about famous people who lived over 100 years ago. There's no way of knowing how they moved, what they sounded like, and it's impossible to capture any person absolutely. In the end, you know, and after I'd done most of the research, I put away the books and I tried to write from the right side of the brain. Do you know what I mean?

DN: Absolutely. When you begin writing a play like *Fake*, do you envision directing it as well? Do you have a directorial point of view as you're writing the play?

ES: The more I write plays the more I try to make them accessible to any director. So I think my work has become more literary; that is, less dependent on scenery and stage directions. I've also been writing plays with smaller casts and smaller scenes, which helps make richer characters, ones that an actor might have a better time with. At least that's my intention.

DN: Well, you've certainly created some rich roles for the actors in *Fake*. Where did the inspiration for the play originate?

ES: I was flipping through TV channels one night a few years ago. One of the programs had a documentary on the mystery of Piltdown Man, and the documentary made a compelling case for why, in this case, fact was stranger than fiction, or at least fact was as strange as fiction, in that there was this mystery out there that no one had yet solved, and that mystery had real characters with interesting motivations. The subject seemed ripe for drama. Also, I've always been interested in paradigms of revolution in science. Like before the earth was discovered to be round, it was universally thought flat, and then a scientist proved this wrong; that completely undermined what we believe of our real world, and we had to start over again. We're forever trying to find the truth about the world around us and forever having the rug pulled out from under us. We know this, and yet we never stop searching for the truth.

DN: In the play, the character Doug says, "Nothing can be proven ever in the world. We think we have everything down, we think we get it all right, and then poof, something comes along and smashes it all to bits. Then we start all over again."

ES: Yes, that's what I'm talking about, and there's also the fact that we are obsessed with investigating ourselves, that is, as a species, as a part of the natural world. And everybody's idea of what is real is completely different. Also—and this is an idea that comes from evolutionary theory—scientists believe that we have evolved into animals who are hard-wired to be curious beings. Even if we tried, we'd never stop trying to solve mysteries. It's in our nature. And our curiosity plays a large part in discovering worlds both seen and unseen. New theories in science, new religions, our belief in God, or gods, are all a result of our innate urge to explore the world around us. It's a survival instinct, really. When I was researching the play, I read a lot about Darwin. I read a biography or two on Doyle. I was reading contemporary pieces on evolution, a lot of science essays, books about evolutionary science, Jesuit philosophy and Catholicism, and it was also a time during which I experienced a significant personal loss, so I had a lot of serious questions about the world around me that I had never asked for myself about what I believe.

DN: Was it defining for you in terms of what you believe, what you have faith in?

ES: Yes, actually. I decided that it is pretty much impossible to know a world outside of our own personal experiences and memories. And that, actually, may be okay.

DN: One of the things you explore in the play, and I think there are three instances where this is the case, is that an encounter with death can amplify or sometimes diminish those systems we've created for ourselves.

ES: Yes, there's mourning throughout the play.

DN: I think that's interesting because you're making a connection between the evolutionary need to create these systems for ourselves and the fact that evolution is tied to the cycle of death. That's why it's constantly ongoing. Discoveries are constantly being made, and old beliefs are constantly being smashed. It's all part of the cycle, right?

ES: Yes, it goes back to this notion of our curious nature. We are hunters and gatherers, or used to be anyway; we're not like the koala bear who only needs eucalyptus leaves and he's good for the day, or, say, the snake who only needs only a mouse. Humans must digest and get nutrition from a number of sources, and evolution has made us multi-taskers: we are born with the ability to find berries, hunt for animals, determine the best way to catch a fish all at once. This is how we became curious beings. And this evolutionary talent propels us into a world of not just hunting and gathering, but investigating all sorts of things, including ourselves and the rest of the universe. We're drawn to mystery, and death is the greatest mystery of all.

DN: It's fascinating. What are you looking forward to, and what do you think might be the challenges as you enter the rehearsal process?

ES: I'm looking forward to working with the ensemble, with my talented cast. Martha Lavey, Erica Daniels and I took a great deal of care putting this group together, and I feel like I'm going to be able to really hear the play the way I hear it in my head. And it's a lot of fun to create something you feel passionate about, and something that's never been done before. The challenges are going to be the usual challenges of putting up a new play: making sure the story's heard clearly, that the thoughts are fresh. There are a lot of themes to the play. If I can spin a good yarn and illuminate at least a couple of those ideas, I'll be happy.



the mystery of piltdown man

by Artistic Intern **Knud Adams**

20

Is it possible that Charles Dawson, an amateur archeologist, discovered one of the most important finds of the 20th century? That's what he claimed to the Geological Society of London in 1912, and Arthur Smith Woodward, an expert from the British Museum, backed his story. Together they presented Piltdown Man, an ancient skull that seemingly proved that humans evolved from apes.

Dawson began excavating the Piltdown quarry four years earlier, after workmen found mysterious bone fragments amongst the gravel. Dawson enlisted the help of Woodward and paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who, like Dawson and Piltdown Man, loom large in Eric Simonson's play *Fake*. Together they unearthed a most unusual skull, with a brain two-thirds the size of a modern man's and a chimpanzee-like jaw. Equally exciting, Piltdown Man was found on English soil, suggesting that the first humans were British!

Almost immediately following Dawson's presentation, Piltdown Man fell under attack. Prominent French and American scientists were skeptical of the reconstruction; they argued that the skull and jaw might have come from separate species. However, these critics couldn't explain the fact that the pieces were discovered within feet of each other or the identical coloration of the samples. Accusations of a mistaken reconstruction were



silenced when the Piltdown site provided additional skull fragments and teeth that supported Dawson's theory.

While an accidental mix-up proved unlikely, some believed Piltdown Man to be a deliberate hoax. Who would perpetrate such a fraud? The list of suspects included Charles Dawson, Arthur Smith Woodward, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, as well as notorious trickster William Horace de Vere Cole, author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and evolutionist Sir Arthur Keith. Or perhaps this was a national conspiracy? Was the first Briton falsified in order to surpass French and German finds?

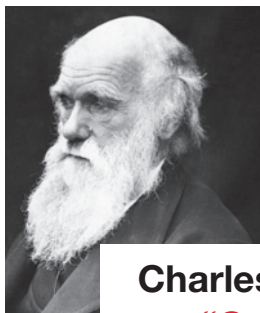
How was such a convincing specimen created? What about the human-like molars in a chimpanzee-sized jaw or the authentic aging effects? These questions lingered for decades. Finally, in 1953, new methods of chemical dating allowed scientists to accurately assess the validity of the bones, and the true nature of Piltdown Man was revealed.

in the throes of crisis

by Artistic Intern **Knud Adams**

Ensemble member Eric Simonson's play *Fake* draws upon historical figures, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who lived during a time of philosophical and scientific revolution. This upheaval began in 1859, when Charles Darwin published his controversial theory of natural selection. Darwin's work instigated new scientific approaches to answering existential questions and complicated man's perception of his identity. While Darwin rejected religion and turned towards science, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle sought to reaffirm his spiritual faith; however, the beliefs of both men were shaped by personal crisis and loss.

22



Charles Darwin

“Our patron saint”

Charles Darwin was raised in a religious household; he was baptized, he attended church weekly, and he boarded at an Anglican school. He went on to study at Christ's College, where he worked toward becoming a clergyman. After graduating, he seized the opportunity to sail with the HMS Beagle; he hoped to travel the world before continuing his religious career. During this life altering voyage, Darwin observed the natural phenomena that shook his already wavering belief in the creation story. By his return, he had committed his life to scientific investigation and the theory of natural selection.

Darwin married a religious woman—his cousin Emma Wedgwood—and together they had ten children. While raising his family, he continued his scientific experimentation and drifted further from the church. His most beloved daughter died at age nine. This crisis shattered Darwin's remaining faith and he ceased attending services. Every Sunday, he left his family at the church gate to wander the surrounding countryside.

Upon Darwin's death in 1882, his wife censored atheistic passages from his autobiography; for instance, he had written: “Thus disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete. The rate was so slow that I felt nodistress, and have never since doubted even for a single second that my conclusion was correct.” Although Darwin described his journey to atheism as being rational and gradual, history suggests that it was impelled by the loss of a child.



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

“Mr. Sherlock Holmes himself”

As Darwin's theories shook firmly held religious beliefs, many hoped spiritism would scientifically prove the existence of an afterlife; one such believer was **Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**. Although Doyle's tombstone reads, “Knight, patriot, physician and man of letters,” he is most remembered for his stories featuring Sherlock Holmes. Authoring dozens of mysteries, Doyle was somewhat of a detective himself; he investigated supernatural phenomena. After losing his brother, mother and son, he became obsessed with matters of the occult and spiritism.

Followers of Spiritism believed that trained mediums communicate with the dead, and they gathered for séances and spectacular demonstrations of hypnotism, automatic writing and poltergeist visitations. Spiritism spread widely across Europe and the United States during the later half of the nineteenth century; by 1897, it had attracted over eight million followers. Many of Spiritism's most ardent supporters had lost a loved one; Mary Todd Lincoln held séances in the White House to contact her deceased son. Indeed, interest in Spiritism spiked after the Civil War and World War I, both periods of great loss.

Spiritist philosophers appropriated from Darwin's theories, postulating that spirits evolve in the afterlife by ascending through a series of purifying spheres before joining God. They used Darwin's model of natural selection to describe this purgatory-like journey. Darwin himself attended a séance in 1874, but he was unimpressed by the spectacle of sparks and levitating furniture. Later he wrote, "The Lord have mercy on us if we have to believe such rubbish." While Darwin remained skeptical of Spiritism, other men of intellect, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, were among its greatest champions; Doyle went so far as to launch an American lecture tour in which he shared documentation of séances and spirit photography. These convincing slides inspired screams, fainting and even suicide.

Fantastical creatures, such as the Cottingley Fairies, also fascinated Doyle. These fairies were photographed by two young girls, who took turns posing with the elegant winged creatures in their backwoods. Doyle published the photographs and defended their validity. Fifty years after his death, the women admitted to fabricating the images with paper cutouts, but they insisted they had seen real fairies; they only created the fakes to get back at the adults who had disbelieved their genuine discovery.

Doyle also touted his friend Harry Houdini as evidence of the supernatural. Although Houdini explained that his magic tricks were merely physical feats, Doyle insisted the magician possessed otherworldly powers. Their friendship ended when Doyle arranged a séance to contact Houdini's recently deceased mother. After a medium generated a heartfelt letter in English from his mother's ghost, Houdini revealed that she had only spoken Hungarian and Yiddish, and he denounced the séance as a sham. Doyle and Houdini stopped speaking, and their enmity manifested itself in a battle of hostile letters waged through the press.

Defying criticism, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle remained a resolute believer until his death in 1929. While the death of his child hastened Darwin's rejection of Christianity, Doyle's loss inspired a lasting faith in spiritism and the afterlife. Wounded by personal loss, both men sought to reinvestigate fundamental questions of faith—"Who are we?" and "Why do we exist?"

designer's notebook

***Fake* is set in two time periods separated by several decades: 1914 and 1953. We invited Kärin Kopischke, costume designer for *Fake*, to share her secrets for making those decades disappear in seconds.**

Fake is about the discovery of the Piltdown Man skull in 1914 England and the subsequent proof that it was a hoax four decades later in 1953. Five actors portray five characters from each decade. The 1914 characters are based on historical figures (including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle) and the 1953 characters present a fictionalized account of the uncovering and confirmation of the hoax. The play jumps back and forth between the two decades, with the actors each jumping back and forth between their two characters.

The 1914 characters live in an Edwardian world: The colors are dark and saturated; the textures are rich and plush; the atmosphere is full of mystery and intrigue. By contrast, the 1953 characters exist in the scientifically “carbon-dating” age: the colors are bright and modern mid-century pastels; the textures are cold and steely; the lines are clean and spare; this world is stark and rational.

Playwright/Director Eric Simonson and I didn’t want to go to extreme lengths to “fool” the audience about the actors’ transformations, but we did want each character to be immediately recognizable within their world and time period. The costume changes themselves need to convey the period but happen almost instantaneously. For example, ensemble member Kate Arrington transforms from Rebecca Eastman (1914) to Katarina Meras (1953) and back to Rebecca again. To make those transitions seamless, I’m trying to incorporate what Kat wears on Rebecca’s costume. We see a little bit of Kat coming through at the neckline, which will add a nice little

Rebecca
I3



Rebecca
1914



Katarina
1953



Rebecca
1914

touch to Rebecca's suit. The change from Rebecca to Kat involves literally opening up the jacket and taking it off, then opening up the skirt and taking it off. Technically, it's a fun, quick change and hopefully it's magical.

When Eric wrote the play, he just wanted the two decades and the two groups of people to tell the story. He really didn't see a specific connection between characters through actor doubling. But I think we, as audience members, are going to look for that. I like the very subtle touch of there being a little bit of texture and color that is a constant between Rebecca and Kat. The two are very strong women; they're ahead of their time. Maybe there wasn't a connection when he was writing it, but there is one subliminally or subconsciously. I imagine that Kate Arrington will explore how these women are similar but also how they are different.



overth

I've always liked to think too much, or so I've been told. For the past eleven years, the subject I've spent the most time thinking about is new plays in the American theater. Along with the work itself—the pages, set designs, performances—thinking about the

American theater means engaging with the world in a particular and compelling way. The theater opens me up to the world of ideas, politics, art—the three basic thought groups to my mind—the things that catapult me into over thinking. This season I will take a moment in the program to “over think” each of the plays. I look forward to your responses and ideas as we meet and engage with one another in this headspace. —**Polly**

“All nationalisms have a metaphysical dimension, for they are driven by an ambition to realize their intrinsic essence in some specific and tangible form... Although the problems created by such an ambition are sufficiently intractable in themselves, they are intensified to the point of absurdity when a nationalist self-conception imagines itself to be the ideal model to which all others should conform.”

—*Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*, Seamus Deane

In *Fake*, I'm struck by how a group of highly educated men could insist on the authenticity of Piltdown Man for almost 40 years. I would argue that a whittled down cricket bat taken for a weapon or tool of this Piltdown Man—The First Englishman—is an absurdity that can only be accounted for within a transcendent form of nationalism—a deep desire to believe in the truth of a national character. Isn't it a kind of hubris defined by boundaries that drives nations to invade other countries—to believe our values and our

inking the play

by Director of Artistic Development **Polly Carl**

ways of life are superior? The English colonized Africa and Ireland, the Nazis rose to power, and we invaded Iraq based on the truth of our own superiority. One of the real fakes in this play is the truth of a singular notion of nation.

The core of Eric Simonson's play *Fake* is about *belief*, about our faith in objects to tell the story of our past and present. When we look past the frame for the play—past the objects themselves—I think we see the burgeoning role of nationalism in Europe at the turn of the 19th century. We see the desire of all European countries leading up to World War I to establish not only a delineated but also a superior national identity.

When the play begins in East Sussex in 1914 on the cusp of the Great War, England and Germany are the two great military powers and the competition between the two nations makes the Piltdown Man discovery particularly important. The idea that the link to Modern Man is found on English soil is not only “a scientific shot in the arm” as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle says in the play's opening, but affirms in the minds of the English that the Englishman came first. This is an archeological find that suggests a genetic edge for the British over their European counterparts.

By 1953, after the devastation of WWII, the notion of national identity within Europe is thoroughly corrupted. This makes it possible for the great minds of the Museum of Natural History in England to reconsider their belief in these sacred objects.

Perhaps only Teilhard de Chardin anticipated the divisions inherent within nationalism, as his ambitions were less parochial. He made it his life-long mission to create the Omega Point—an unstoppable evolutionary biological and spiritual drive toward one man, one nation. As he says in the play, “to me there is no such thing as borders when it comes to putting together pieces of the past.” Chardin's words presage the value of the internet, Facebook—the way our identities merge together across borders, through technology. But do these new tools create a more complicated genealogy through a less fixed notion of identity or merely flatten our contemporary notion of self?

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28



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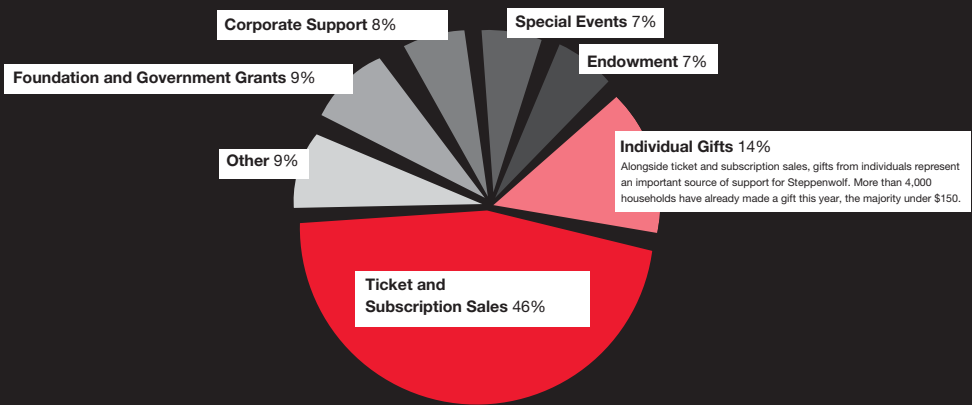
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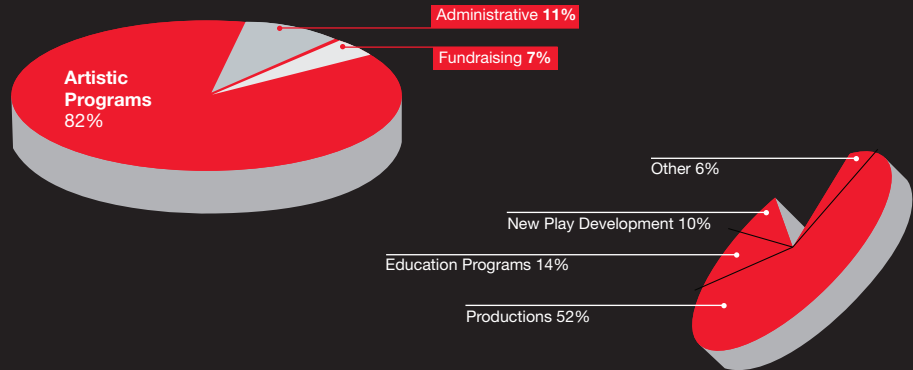
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Michael McKean with ensemble member Jon Michael Hill

2005

Commissioned by Steppenwolf

2008

Premiered at Steppenwolf

2009

Broadway Premiere

Superior Donuts

by ensemble member **Tracy Letts**

directed by ensemble member **Tina Landau**

Thanks to donor support, the transfer of *Superior Donuts* to Broadway this fall continues Steppenwolf's success in the realm of new play development.

The New Play Initiative, launched in 1995 and supported by individual and organizational contributions, has commissioned and developed over 40 works by more than 30 playwrights.

Our robust approach to the cultivation of new works grows out of our recognition that major new plays like *Superior Donuts* take several years of development, workshops, readings and re-writes.

Steppenwolf deeply appreciates the many partners whose ongoing support has helped us become a leader in the development of new American plays, especially:

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Spending your intermission in line at the bar? Enjoy the entire break by ordering and paying for your intermission refreshments *before* the show. When you exit the theatre at the end of the first act, your drinks will be waiting for you.

Need directions, restaurant information or the score of the ballgame? Visit our book shop and information desk at the south end of the lobby, and our concierge will find an answer for you.

Want to check a coat, shopping bag or luggage? Located at the north end of the Downstairs lobby, our coat check is complimentary and open most of the year. Visiting us in the warmer months when it's closed? Just ask us, and we'll happily check your items.

Hailing a cab after the play? This is typically an easy affair – Halsted is a busy street and sees a fair amount of taxi traffic. If you'd like assistance hailing a cab or calling a company, though, just ask a member of the house staff – we're happy to help.

Lost or Found? Just gotten home, only to discover you've lost something? Call the house manager's office at 312-932-2445. Found an item? Please give it to a member of the house staff, along with the location where it was found.

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2009-10 season

what happens when we choose to believe?

Join us for five tales that examine what happens when we make the choice to believe.



ensemble member Kate Arrington in *a parallelogram*

September 10 - November 8, 2009

fake

a new play written and directed by ensemble member

Eric Simonson

featuring ensemble members **Kate Arrington**,
Francis Guinan and **Alan Wilder**

The adventures of amateur sleuths unearth one of the world's greatest hoaxes

December 3, 2009 - February 7, 2010

american buffalo

by **David Mamet**

directed by ensemble member **Amy Morton**

featuring ensemble members **Francis Guinan**
and **Tracy Letts**

A trio of small-time Chicago crooks become entangled in a desperate plan

January 21 - May 23, 2010

the brother/sister plays

In the Red and Brown Water

The Brothers Size and Marcus; Or the Secret of Sweet

by **Tarell Alvin McCraney**

directed by ensemble member **Tina Landau**

featuring ensemble members **Alana Arenas**,
K. Todd Freeman and **Ora Jones**

A passionate young man comes of age in a sleepy Louisiana bayou community

April 1 - June 6, 2010

endgame

by **Samuel Beckett**

directed by ensemble member **Frank Galati**

featuring ensemble members **Ian Barford**,
Francis Guinan, **Martha Lavey** and **William Petersen**

An actor-king and his beleaguered servant await the end of everything

July 1 - August 29, 2010

a parallelogram

a new play by **Bruce Norris**

directed by ensemble member **Anna D. Shapiro**

featuring ensemble member **Kate Arrington**

A young woman discovers an amazing ability to see the future (and maybe change it)

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